

# DRIVER'S SEAT

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## FORSCOM Plan to Allocate Ammo Draws Armor Center Alternative

by CSM David L. Lady, Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Armor Center

It is the rare tankerman who believes that he has enough ammunition for gunnery training! The STRAC (Standards in Training Commission) allowance of 90 main-gun rounds per tank per year was an unpopular reduction which permitted the purchase of the Tank Weapons Gunnery Simulation System (TWGSS). As an armor force, we have a long way to go in order to reap the full benefit of TWGSS; we need enough spare systems/PLL on hand to repair/replace bad components "on the spot," as well as a better NETT and sustainment training system. Initiatives to improve TWGSS-user training have been proposed by the Directorate of Training and Doctrine Development (DTDD), but the fact remains that most tankers want more main gun ammunition; many commanders want the ammunition in order to better resource unit collective-training tank tables XI and XII, as well as an annual CALFEX.

FORSCOM staff has been working on a STRAC XXI proposal, in order to recommend improvements to *DA Pam 350-38*. This proposal was presented by the FORSCOM Master Gunner, MSG Ronnie Ward, at the CSM Update during the Armor Conference and, more recently, at the Gunnery Conference conducted at Fort Knox 22-24 Jun 99. *For more on the STRAC XXI proposal, see "Budgeting the Bullets," pg. 49. — Ed.*

The strategy model represented a three-track approach to training and qualification: a live-fire track in which all crew-level tables are fired with main-gun ammunition, a simulation track in which all crew-level tables are fired using TADSS (Training Aids, Devices, Simulations and Simulators), and a track that combines both. The goal of this proposal is to har-

vest ammunition savings from crew-tables and shift this ammunition to collective-level training tables. This proposal emphasizes using TADSS and allowing the commander to determine the track each crew takes through qualification. This proposal utilizes the current 90-round strategy for Armor.

STRAC XXI for M1A1/A2 tank battalions w/TWGSS would make no change to current requirements for COFT/AGTS; it would require TCGST and a Dry/TADSS Tank Crew Proficiency Course prior to both Level I and II Gunnery. Live Fire Accuracy Screening Test (LFAST) and Tank Table V would remain mandatory live fire tables. Following TTV, the commander would have the option of directing his crews into one of the three tracks. If the TC/gunner had qualified live-fire TTVIII within the past 12 months, the crew could fire TTVI and VII using TADSS (generally TWGSS) and fire a "modified" TTVIII. If the crew met the standard for TTVIII-M, then they would be Qualified and would go on to live-fire TTs XI and XII and/or CALFEX. If the TC/gunner had not qualified live-fire TTVIII in the past 12 months, then TTs VI, VII, and VIII would be live-fire qualification tables. The third track, involving total use of TADSS, would only be used by experienced qualified crews determined by the commander as not needing to live-fire prior to the advanced tables. With the ammunition saved by using the combination or TADSS track for previously qualified crews, commanders would have a "harvest" for more robust TTs XI and XII and for a CALFEX.

At both presentations the consensus of attendees was that crew-level proficiency

would suffer if commanders were allowed too much latitude. This consensus was based on the current level of training and qualification with their units. Also, the Armor Center was asked to better specify the gates and prerequisites for each track.

It was during the Gunnery Conference that MSG Steven Delabar (Platoon Gunnery Doctrine Branch NCOIC, who co-authored this article) presented an Armor Center proposal for STRAC XXI. This USAARMC model is based on the FORSCOM approach and has two tracks: a live-fire track in which all crew-level tables are fired with main gun ammunition and a track that combines TADSS with live-fire to verify proficiency before moving into collective-level gunnery. This model allows the harvesting of ammunition savings from crew-level tables and shifting these savings to collective-level training tables, while maintaining proficiency and safety at crew-level gunnery. FORSCOM's third track would not be used in the "qualification" sense, but could be used by commanders if the unit was deployed to an area where there are no live-fire ranges or laser-engagement areas to sustain some gunnery proficiency.

Both tracks maintain COFT/AGTS requirements, require hands-on TCGST, and TCPG using TWGSS. Screening and TTV would remain live fire in both tracks. Following TTV, the commander could direct the crews to one of two tracks, one of which would lead to qualification and the other to "proficiency verification."

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In order to proceed along the verification track, crews must meet the following criteria: 1) Crews must be previous Q-1 on TTVIII within the last 12 months; 2) Crews must achieve RA Level 301 in the COFT. Crews would then fire TTVI using TADSS and must qualify 4 of 5 TTVII tasks (Tasks A-2, A-5, A-6, B-1, and B-3) in live fire with 70 points on each engagement and a score of 350 points overall. Meeting the TTVII(5) standard would achieve proficiency verification, and the crew would continue into collective-level training. The tasks selected for TTVII(5) are listed below:

**A-2 (Offense)** Engage multiple targets with multiple weapon systems from a moving tank.

**A-5 (Defense)** Engage multiple targets from a defensive firing position.

**A-6 (Defense)** Engage multiple targets with multiple weapon systems from a defensive firing position.

**B-1 (Offense)** Engage multiple targets with multiple weapon systems from a moving tank.

**B-3 (Offense)** Engage multiple targets with multiple weapon systems from a moving tank.

New TC/gunner combinations, and crews that did not qualify in the last gunnery cycle (Q-2) must fire TTVI, TTVII, and TTVIII live fire to achieve the proficiency required before proceeding to advanced tables. This comprises the qualification track which leads to collective-level training.

The Armor Center position is that all crews firing TTXII must be qualified on gunnery Table VIII within the preceding

12 months and, as a minimum, qualify 4 of 5 TTVII engagements live fire with 70 points on each engagement and total 350 points or more within the preceding six months. To require any less of our crews will lead to unacceptable proficiency and safety risks as units enter collective-level training. Either of these tracks requires we noncommissioned officers to verify proficiency or qualify all crews in the unit, and to confidently hand them off to commanders for collective-level training.

This approach to STRAC XXI for Armor and Cavalry will allow commanders to utilize more ammunition for collective-level gunnery, and remain confident that NCO-led, crew-level gunnery training will set their units up for success. Discussions with FORSCOM continue, meanwhile...

“SERGEANT, TAKE THE LEAD”